

BRITISH
LITERATURE
OF
WORLD WAR I

2



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Volume 2
Ruby M. Ayres, *Richard Chatterton, V.C.* (1915)

Edited by
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LONDON
PICKERING & CHATTO
2011

*Published by Pickering & Chatto (Publishers) Limited
21 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2TH
2252 Ridge Road, Brookfield, Vermont 05036-9704, USA
www.pickeringchatto.com*

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BRITISH LIBRARY CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION DATA

British literature of World War I.

1. English fiction – 20th century. 2. Short stories, English – 20th century.
3. English drama – 20th century. 4. World War, 1914–1918 – Literature and
the war.

I. Maunder, Andrew. II. Smith, Angela K.
820.8'0358403-dc22

ISBN-13: 9781848930421



This publication is printed on acid-free paper that conforms to the American
National Standard for the Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials.

*Typeset by Pickering & Chatto (Publishers) Limited
Printed in the United Kingdom at MPG Books Group, Bodmin and King's Lynn*

INTRODUCTION

Just how the war is going to affect new fiction is one of those questions about which it is still unsafe to prophesy. Certain brands, of course, will go on until Doomsday. The detective story is good for another century at least, and probably that new monstrosity the cinema-serial will 'carry on' until something less literary takes its place. There will be women writers, no doubt, to continue their propaganda for the 'freedom' of their own sex under the guise of fiction – they make rather dull reading now, by the way, when women are doing such splendid work for their 'lords and masters,' – and there is no reason why the historical novel should ever die out. But it is just about the novels of modern manners that the difficulty arises. You may ignore the war altogether and continue in the old order of things, and disarm criticism by carefully starting off with some such sentence as 'It was a warm September evening in 1907', which will give you a clear run of seven years for your characters to develop ... Or you may write a full-blooded war-yarn with spies and wireless and a spicing of V.C.'s. Or if you are a very wise novelist, you may hold your pen awhile and be content to 'wait and see.'¹

Ruby M. Ayres, one of the most popular novelists of the twentieth century, and one of the most productive, did not want to 'wait and see'. Born in Watford in 1881, the daughter of an architect, she published about 150 books between 1912 and the early 1950s.² *Richard Chatterton, V.C.* was one of her earliest popular romances. It was rushed out in the summer of 1915,³ and was republished several times during the war.⁴ Ayres made no secret of the fact that she wrote primarily to make money, and not to explore complex issues.⁵ 'First I fix the price. Then I fix the title. Then I write the book.'⁶ She liked romance and never aspired to push her writing beyond conventional, popular forms. As she told an interviewer in 1924: 'If I had the choice of all the callings in the world I would still choose the one I already follow, and I have certainly never found writing a labour.'⁷ Her policy seemed to work and she was reputed to churn out as many as 20,000 words on a good day. A supportive husband (Reginald Pocock, an insurance broker) and no children seemed to help. In a 1931 *Saturday Review* article, 'What Factory Workers Read', Ayres was listed alongside Florence Barclay, Mrs Henry Wood, Maude Diver and Ethel M. Dell as one of the authors most popular with teenage female workers who were generally unwilling, so it

was reported, to 'float into deeper literary waters'.⁸ Her novels offered escapism and respite. Despite this, *Richard Chatterton* manages to touch upon important ideas at work in the early part of World War I.

As critic Rachel Anderson points out, in most of Ayres's novels there is very little historical context. Some were republished over the decades with very little amendment, without becoming dated.⁹ *Richard Chatterton* is different, however. Even as it presents itself as a timeless romance, it is in important ways specific to its historical moment. It describes experiences, attitudes and fantasies which were especially strong in England during a particular period – the early months of World War I. A book written even a year later would look rather different, for reasons I will explore shortly.

A reviewer for the *Athenaeum* summed *Richard Chatterton* up as follows:

This is one of a large crop of inevitable 'war novels.' It is good of its kind, and if the general standard falls no lower, there will be little harm done ... The working-out of the plot and the character drawing are adequate, and the language and sentiments in general are sufficiently restrained to avoid the dangers that usually attend the feuilleton made to order.¹⁰

The book opens with the handsome young eponymous hero, short of money but long on style, lazing at his club. He is engaged to be married to Sonia. The two characters come from different parts of the middle class: his family are landed gentry (now somewhat decayed), who once owned a big house and land. They have lost their money through speculation and extravagance. Sonia's family is from the commercial middle class. They have made a lot of money and some years earlier her father bought the Chattertons' house. Richard and Sonia's parents are now dead. The marriage of these two young people will bring the old name and the new money together, revitalizing the old middle class and legitimizing the new.

However, early in the novel, neither Sonia nor Richard values their forthcoming marriage very highly. Their relationship looks precarious. Richard's friends suspect he is marrying Sonia for her money, and to return to his beloved family home; they wonder if he really cares for Sonia herself. There is some truth in this suspicion. Sonia on the other hand is keen on Richard, but she loves the idea of him more than the man himself. Now that war has broken out, she is more passionate about the conflict than about her fiancé. She soon becomes irritated with him; why does he not enlist? She decides she does not want to marry a 'laggard', and ends the engagement. She does not tell Richard the reason, feeling he ought to know his duty without being told.

Sonia is naively patriotic, imagining the war to be nothing but glory and excitement. She has no sense of its seriousness, nor of its suffering. For his part, Richard has no interest in the war. He is not afraid to go – he doesn't 'funk' – he

simply never thinks of it. He fails to enlist out of sheer laziness. Nor does he have any moral objection to the war. Indeed, there are no pacifists in Ayres's world. Richard is looking forward to being master of his old house and enjoying the wealth that his marriage to Sonia will bring. When Sonia ends the engagement, the shock of losing this pleasant future brings him to his senses. He joins the army without telling anyone, being driven to enlist partly out of hurt pride. But soon he finds that being in uniform changes him. It awakens his dormant pride in his nation and in himself. He feels part of something larger than himself. His life has a greater purpose.

As Ayres points out many times in the novel, by enlisting, Richard becomes a *man*. She makes the point so often, in fact, that it starts to look rather uncertain. If gender were really so obvious and simple, why does it need so much reiteration? It seems to me that, despite her frequent references to Richard's new manliness, Ayres is not really interested in the question of gender. Her novel contributes to the propaganda of the day, encouraging men to enlist, and women to support the men, and she is content to use clichéd ideas about gender to this purpose.¹¹ But the more powerful aspects of the book engage with different political questions: what does it mean to be a middle-class citizen in the early twentieth century? What is one's duty in the modern world? How do people locate themselves in relation to the traditions of class and marriage, and the modernity of industrial warfare? Though Ayres does not pursue these questions in much depth, they nonetheless inform the novel and make it compelling.

Ayres works with a familiar romantic plot: the young couple fall in love, are driven apart, overcome various obstacles, realize the depth of their love for one another, and finally come together, strengthened by the challenges they have faced. Alongside this is a comic plot of two older characters, Lady Merriam and Mr Jardine. They help the young couple and do what they can to get them back together. Both Sonia and Richard have no living parents; the older people become substitute mother and father and are an important part of the plot. Much of the writing of World War I expresses great bitterness between generations. Poets such as Owen and Sassoon felt that the older generation had betrayed the young men who served.¹² Vera Brittain in her memoir *Testament of Youth* (1933) and 'Helen Zenna Smith' (the pseudonym of Evadne Price) in her novel *Not So Quiet* (1930) take similar views. These attitudes emerged later than Ayres's novel, and became one of the most powerful tropes in World War I writing of the 1920s and '30s. Ayres, however, sees no generational conflict. In her world, the older characters guide and help the younger, and the old men genuinely regret that they cannot be involved. ('If I were only twenty years younger', says Jardine on many occasions.) Ayres is not interested in addressing the difficult moral questions which arise when young men are urged or coerced into risking their lives. Yet the questions are there, in suppressed forms, in the latter

part of the novel. Ayres is also firm that non-combatants owe a lifelong duty of care to men damaged by the war. A few years later, veterans such as Richard Aldington and Ivor Gurney would complain, justifiably, that such care was never adequately provided.

* * *

The plot of Richard and Sonia's failed engagement is nicely complicated by the presence of Richard's friend Montague. Montague is secretly in love with Sonia and he helps to undermine her engagement to Richard. He hints to Sonia that Richard is a coward, that Richard is only marrying her for her money and that he, Montague, is her humble but deserving lover. Sonia persuades herself to believe him, and even becomes engaged to Montague. She knows she does not love him but intends to marry him out of sheer stubbornness.

Montague himself does not volunteer for the war because he has a disability, caused by a car accident shortly before the war began. Ayres suggests that Montague rather exploits his 'picturesque limp'. He does nothing to help the war effort. He could contribute money (he is wealthy) or help in other ways. Where Sonia knits socks (incompetently but with enthusiasm) and makes her house available to convalescent soldiers, Montague has no interest in helping others in this time of crisis. He simply wants to marry Sonia and enjoy life with her. In the context of the novel, his aspirations are intolerably selfish.

However, Ayres stops short of creating a real villain out of Montague. He is self-centred, like Richard, with the added fault of being manipulative. Richard is straightforward and honest, and has the capacity to learn and mature. Montague does not mature, nor learn from experience. He is cast as a failure rather than as a villain. And it is precisely because he cannot go to war that he does not mature. As Jane Potter points out, much popular literature published during World War I represents the war as the 'great purifier' of modern society, something which was also taken up in the popular press (see the General Introduction to this edition).¹³ Going to war, these novels suggest, brings depth and maturity to those who serve. By the end of the war and into the peace, many people felt that the war did nothing but harm; but others continued to feel that some kind of maturity and common purpose was achieved in this terrible experience.¹⁴ And the sheer intensity of some war experiences was, in its way, very attractive to some people; this is perhaps one reason that war literature and films remain so popular. The best of these works recognize that, alongside the terror and horror, there can be a perverse pleasure in war.¹⁵ And there is another kind of pleasure, which is *not* perverse, in a community striving together for a common purpose. This is how the war looked to many people, especially at the beginning.

It is not until late in the novel that Sonia learns that Richard is serving in the war. By then, he has been mildly wounded, come to England to recuperate, then returned to the front. Just as Richard has woken up to his duty to serve, Sonia wakes up to the fact that loving someone serving in the war is an acutely anxious experience. Her ideas about glory are replaced with concerns for the welfare of the men at war. Ayres presents the war as a necessary evil, rather than as something to celebrate. It is a serious business. Her book suggests that the war has to be supported, even as the reality of its damage to individual lives needs to be recognized.

In his second period at the front, Richard proves himself a true hero. He shows great courage under fire, rescuing two wounded men, for which he is awarded the prestigious Victoria Cross for bravery. He is badly wounded himself, and almost dies. A newspaper mistakenly reports that he is dead. Sonia is full of grief and regret. She pulls out of her promise to marry Montague, and prepares to live as a kind of widow, in memory of Richard. Then it turns out that he is not dead, but seriously wounded. Gradually he recovers, and finally the lovers are reunited. They have each realized the depth of their love for one another. And they have realized their duty to the nation in time of war. Having overcome serious obstacles, their marriage is meaningful and, despite the war's continuing, it represents some kind of hope for the future.

Is this then a 'war novel'? Not precisely. Rather, we might describe it as a popular romance which is set during World War I, and which uses some of the values and experiences of the war as the mechanisms to drive its plot. In 1915 a writer in the *Nation* noted how

Books of fiction about the war are almost foredoomed to failure – for reasons too obvious to merit discussion. But to create fictitious characters and let the war cut across their plans and imaginations as it has in fact cut across the plans and imaginations of us all – that is a different matter.¹⁶

This is partly what Ayres does. She is I think quite skilful at utilizing the material to hand. She can tell a very old, somewhat clichéd story and make it seem new in a new context. The sections set at the war are fairly explicit about the violence and suffering endured by the men under fire (see chapter XVIII, below, pp. 188–202). For readers in 1915 who had family and friends at the war, this material might have been both thrilling and disturbing. Like the later memoirs by veterans, Ayres's novel imagines battle as terrifying yet exhilarating. Unlike those later works, however, Ayres presents the chaos of being under fire as being comprehensible and having a clear purpose. Books such as Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929), Graves, *Good-Bye to All That* (1929) or Montague, *Disenchantment* (1922) draw our attention to the fact that much of the experience of being under fire made little if any sense at all. Injury or death could be

quite random and pointless – the young man blown to pieces by a shell as he makes a cup of tea, for example, in Blunden's *Undertones of War* (1928). These kinds of incidents do not appear in Ayres's novel. Nor does she have anything to say about the vast amount of time soldiers spent away from the front line, often feeling bored and fed up.¹⁷ This aspect of war is of no interest to the romantic writer.

Despite these limitations, *Richard Chatterton* provides useful insights into an important issue at stake in the first year of the war. When war broke out in August 1914, Britain's regular army numbered approximately 700,000, not all of whom were fit for active service.¹⁸ Many more men were needed. In the first month of the war, nearly 300,000 men enlisted.¹⁹ After this initial 'rush to the colours' in August and September 1914, the numbers were not so vast, but nonetheless nearly 2.5 million men voluntarily enlisted in the period August 1914 to December 1915. But even this was not enough. The army needed more manpower.

Tremendous efforts at recruiting went on throughout 1915. Thousands of volunteers organized recruitment meetings and visited potential recruits; vast numbers of posters and leaflets urged men to enlist. For some people, this was a matter of principle: for them, one of the issues at stake in the war was liberal freedom and tolerance which was taking a stand against 'Prussian' militarism. An important element in that freedom was the right to serve, or not, in the nation's army. For liberal-minded British people of the time, it was a matter of some pride that Britain did not have a vast conscript army (unlike many other European countries), yet retained considerable power and prestige in the world (in part due to Britain's large empire, its navy and its industrial wealth). While some felt that conscription was the only possible way to fill the insatiable needs of the war, others felt that conscription would diminish, or even negate, the values Britain was fighting for.

One last effort was made to preserve the voluntary system of enlistment. In August 1915 the National Register was established. All men and women aged between 16 and 65 were obliged to register their age, sex and occupation, and 'to state whether they could and would perform work of national importance'.²⁰ The National Register was supposedly not a preliminary step towards conscription, though the information would be useful when conscription was finally introduced. The idea was to put people under further pressure, forcing them to state whether or not they were prepared to contribute to the war effort, whether in the armed services or at home in essential industries. The idea of having to state officially that one was *unwilling* to help might shame more people into active service or war work.

A few months later, in October 1915, the 'Derby Scheme' began. The National Register was used to establish all the men of suitable age who were not

already in essential work.²¹ These men were all asked to 'attest' that they were willing to take up military service if called. As historian Trevor Wilson points out, this was a huge undertaking. In Leeds, for example, around 42,000 eligible men were found on the Register who were neither in the army nor in essential industries. Volunteer recruiters paid around 200,000 visits to these men, in the last effort to preserve the system of voluntary service.²² The voluntary system was by now much compromised. Men of military age found it increasingly difficult to exercise their legal right *not* to serve in the war effort in some capacity. The liberal ideals at stake were all but lost. The need for many more citizens to be involved in the war effort over-rode other considerations. Early in 1916, an Act introducing conscription was passed in Parliament.²³

This is the context in which Ayres tells her story. When Richard fails even to think of enlisting, he is ignoring tremendous pressure all around him. He is indifferent to the efforts made by other men to help in the war. (Sonia's friend Bertie Courtenay, for example, works hard to ensure he is fit enough to pass the army medical examination.) Richard's laggardliness also weakens the principles of volunteering which, as mentioned earlier, could be seen as one of the liberal values for which the war was supposedly being fought. Ayres's touch is light, but she is alluding to serious political and social issues which her readers in 1915 would have recognized.

Ayres's first readers might also have been aware of the problem of balancing the need for mass mobilization with the need for skilled workers at home to sustain the war effort. A huge army needed an equally huge industrial and agricultural base. To fight a war on this scale required massive production of armaments, vehicles, equipment, etc. To take just one example: in January 1915, some 300 miles of khaki cloth were being produced every week in Britain.²⁴ The army had to be adequately clothed and fed. Huge quantities of medical supplies were needed. And all the goods produced in Britain had to be transported to troops serving in many different locations abroad. It was a massive undertaking, and it is worth recalling that the war could not be fought without this domestic infrastructure. Ayres does not touch upon the question of how the army was fed, shod and so forth; she imagines the war purely in terms of intense military action. In her romantic fiction, men are needed only to fight, not to do medical work, peel potatoes, drive lorries or manufacture weapons; though in reality no fighting could take place without such support.

Furthermore, many industrial jobs, formerly the province of men, were taken up by women. Some women worked in heavy, demanding jobs, hauling coal or manufacturing shells. This shift in the labour market arguably had long-term effects, extending women's job opportunities in many sectors. Ayres's character Sonia is a wealthy heiress who never expects to work. As a romantic heroine, she is charmingly childish and ignorant of the society in which she lives. But the

world in which the book appeared was changing rapidly for women.²⁵ The next generation of Sonias were more likely to go to university and enter the professions. Women such as her maidservant, Lena, were likely to move out of service into better-paid factory work. Though it is not I think true to claim that World War I was generally good for women, nor even that it much improved women's status in society, it did contribute to significant changes in many women's lives. This is one of the book's charms: Sonia's wealth, idleness and her gracious big house (maintained not by her own labour, but by servants) are the kinds of fantasies women readers during the war might enjoy after a hard day's work. The book provides a fantasy of escape from the real world, whilst also offering sympathy to the many readers who were worrying about the safety of their own menfolk at the war. It is reassuring, suggesting to readers that we are all in it together. Above all, Ayres conveys the sense that, difficult as the war is, it is worth the effort.

I am suggesting that Ayres explores political issues which were very important in 1915, the time in which the voluntary system of enlistment was under threat. How could men be encouraged, pressured or shamed into enlisting of their own free will? What role might women play in this process? Ayres complicates the question by making Sonia naively enthusiastic about the war. At first Sonia is ignorant of the emotional pain felt by many families when their menfolk enlisted. She crudely imagines that one should feel nothing but pride and joy when a loved man went off to war and even if he were killed. The novel shows Sonia gradually learning and maturing. Beneath the familiar, even clichéd plot of the woman discovering that she really does love the man she has cast off is a more nuanced story. Ayres explores what it means to discover true love, at the same moment as the beloved is obliged to go away, to face terrible risks and perhaps never come back. Both characters believe in the rightness of the war, and that, as citizens and decent people, men must choose to serve, and women must choose to support them. Sonia and Richard believe in their society, they believe it is genuinely under threat, and they want to defend it, even to the death.

This is one reason that Ayres remains interesting to readers studying World War I today. She offers some insights into why people might have supported the war in 1914–15 and what that support might cost in emotional terms. Ayres does not go into these issues too deeply, nor ask too many awkward questions. But awkward questions lurk in the margins of the novel, and Ayres never quite manages to banish them.

* * *

The romance form has its obvious limitations and clichés. Yet perhaps it has some advantages, too. It can explore difficult questions, if in a limited way, in terms that might feel safe. Where, for example, a pacifist pamphlet of the time might

seem threatening or seditious to many readers, a novel in a familiar form looks comfortable and unchallenging. I do not suggest that Ayres was consciously trying to question Britain's commitment to the war, but she does mildly criticize the idea of mindless patriotism. And she raises questions about what it means to be a citizen in the early twentieth century. Her characters enjoy the privileges of wealth and class, and they have to face up to the responsibility of serving the nation in its time of crisis.

On the other hand, as Samuel Hynes points out, the decades leading up to World War I were already felt to be a time of crisis.²⁶ The Irish struggle for Home Rule, the suffragist campaigns and the strengthening voices of working-class movements, such as the Trades Unions and the emerging Labour Party, all made Britain look dangerously unstable to many middle-class people. One of the myths of the war was that it brought people of all classes together, united in a common cause. This was true in certain respects. But the war also had the effect of temporarily effacing some of the issues of working-class rights and class conflict. It can be argued that in the long term the war probably led to higher wages and better conditions for workers; and that it also led to women finally getting the vote. On the other hand, it can be argued with perhaps equal force that the war delayed these rights. After the war there was a real fear of revolution. Would workers in Britain follow those of Russia in 1917? (Similar issues were faced, even more urgently, in Germany, where there were many local revolutions immediately after the war.) Some people felt that the war took the exploitation of working people to its logical conclusion – workers were, in effect, fighting each other to support capitalism and the state. Workers from different nations ought to work together to create a better world for all of them. French writer Henri Barbusse describes this kind of debate among soldiers at the end of his war novel, *Under Fire* (*Le Feu*, 1916):

It is we who are the material of war. War is made up of the flesh and the souls of common soldiers only. It is we who make the plains of dead and the rivers of blood, all of us, and each of us is invisible and silent because of the immensity of our numbers ...

It's the people who are war; without them, there would be nothing, nothing but some wrangling [among the powerful], a long way off ...

The peoples of the world ought to come to an understanding, through the hides and on the bodies of those who exploit them one way or another. All the masses ought to agree together ...

When all men have made themselves equal, we shall be forced to unite.

And there'll no longer be appalling things done in the face of heaven by thirty million men who don't wish them.²⁷

Barbusse's world is a very far cry from that of Ayres. Ayres imagines loyalty across class divisions, focusing on Chatterton's relationship with his former valet Carter. They both serve as privates in the same regiment. Carter still regards Chatterton

as his 'master', and wants to look after him, though he obeys the military discipline which forbids this. Then, when Carter is critically injured, Chatterton makes a super-human effort to help him. Badly hurt himself, Chatterton plunges into the line of fire to rescue his servant. He is almost killed in the effort. This is a powerful scene. And its politics are the precise opposite of those addressed by Barbusse. In Ayres's world, servants and working-class people do not need to be liberated (nor for that matter do women). The middle classes simply need to pull their socks up. Men such as Richard need to stop slacking about. Women such as Sonia need a bit more awareness and humility. With just a little effort, the middle-class characters become good citizens. They better appreciate people of other classes, and out of the war will come, Ayres implies, a more harmonious and stable nation with its class structures intact. In other words, for Ayres, the war was about keeping things the same; defending against change; whereas for Barbusse, the war exposed the need for change.

For Ayres, the beautiful house and gardens at Burvale stand for the 'England' which is under threat. Many of the old aristocratic families and landed gentry have lost their power. Richard Chatterton has lost the ancestral home and squandered his inheritance. He does not have any kind of job, but lives mainly on credit. The only way he can recover his old home is by marrying into the new middle class – the *nouveau riche* – which is working hard, making money, and buying its way into the houses and lands of the fading gentry. All this had been going on for more than a century; by the time of World War I the commercial middle class had considerable power and respectability. The class snobbery Ayres describes towards Sonia as the daughter of a *parvenu* was already old-fashioned. Ayres takes up attitudes from about the mid-Victorian period, knowing that these attitudes still existed in parts of society. This is perhaps what gives the book its peculiar charm: it fantasizes the security of, say, 1850 (before the shock of the Crimean War) into 1915; the world of industrial warfare. Here I think Ayres is mobilizing fantasies which are at work in many popular writings of the day. As Jane Potter argues, the huge sales of *Richard Chatterton* suggest that such books met a profound need.²⁸ It is impossible now to reconstruct that need, but we might speculate that there was something deeply comforting in this novel. It gives some explicit descriptions of the terrible suffering in the trenches. It acknowledges some of the horrific injuries men might endure. But this distressing information is framed and made bearable within the traditional romance plot, which itself is embedded in traditional structures of class.

The greatest pain the characters suffer is that of their own folly in love. Once Sonia and Richard realize where their true love lies, they can transcend the physical suffering, and build a new life – a life which Ayres presents as stable, old-fashioned, with the middle classes comfortably merged (the old name and the new money) and the other classes happily in their place. This idea is echoed

in the subplot which brings together the two older characters. In their youth, some thirty years earlier, Jardine had proposed to Lady Merriam. She was about to elope with someone else, so she declined Jardine's proposal. Rather unkindly, she told him he was destined to remain a bachelor (unconsciously, perhaps, she was keeping him in reserve, just in case). He believed her prediction and never married. Long widowed, Lady Merriam now realizes that she loves him, and he her. It takes until the final pages of the book for them to come together, and it is this romance, not that of the young couple, which concludes the book. What is the effect of this? It points backwards, to a world of supposed safety and certainty. For Ayres, as for many other novelists and short story writers, the war is being fought to preserve the Victorian world from modernity.

Notes

1. Unsigned Review, 'Books of the Week', *Bystander* (4 October 1916), p. 43.
2. For Ayres's date of birth, I follow C. M. P. Taylor, 'Ruby M. Ayres', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), online edn, article 45542. Some earlier sources, such as *The Times* obituary (15–16 November 1955), give her year of birth as 1883. Taylor points out that Ayres was baptized in February 1881. On Ayres's vast output, see R. Anderson, 'Ruby M. Ayres', in J. Vinson and D. L. Kirkpatrick (eds), *Twentieth-Century Romance and Gothic Writers* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 36–41. This lists almost all of her novels.
3. *Richard Chatterton, V.C.* was well promoted by the publisher, Hodder & Stoughton, appearing in advertisements in *The Times* on 16 July 1915, p. 4; 20 July 1915, p. 4; and 23 July 1915, p. 5.
4. J. Potter, *Boys in Khaki, Girls in Print: Women's Literary Responses to the Great War 1914–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 123.
5. Taylor, 'Ruby M. Ayres'; Anderson, 'Ruby M. Ayres', p. 41.
6. Unsigned obituary, 'Ruby M. Ayres', *The Times*, 15 November 1955, p. 11.
7. Unsigned article, 'My Chief Ambition', *Bookman*, 65 (January 1924), pp. 202–4, on p. 203.
8. Unsigned article, 'What Factory Workers Read, by One of Them', *Saturday Review* (4 April 1931), pp. 492–3, on p. 492.
9. Anderson, 'Ruby M. Ayres', p. 40.
10. Unsigned review, 'Richard Chatterton, V.C.', *Athenaeum*, 4579 (31 July 1915), p. 77.
11. Potter has an interesting discussion of gender in this novel in *Boys in Khaki*, pp. 112–14, 120–1. On literature and propaganda, see P. Buitenhuis, *The Great War of Words: Literature as Propaganda 1914–18 and After* (London: Batsford, 1989).
12. See in particular Wilfred Owen, 'The Parable of the Old Man and the Young' (July 1918). See further J. Stallworthy, *Wilfred Owen: A Biography*, new edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); J. Stallworthy, *Anthem for Doomed Youth* (London: Constable, 2005); J. Stallworthy, *Survivors' Songs: From Maldon to the Somme* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); T. Kendall, *Modern English War Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); T. Kendall (ed.), *The Oxford Book of British and Irish War Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
13. J. Potter, '"A Great Purifier": The Great War in Women's Romances and Memoirs, 1914–1918', in S. Raitt and T. Tate (eds), *Women's Fiction and the Great War* (Oxford:

- Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 85–106. See also H. Small, 'Mrs Humphry Ward and the First Casualty of War', and S. Raitt, "Contagious Ecstasy": May Sinclair's War Journals', both in *ibid.*, pp. 18–46, 65–84.
14. For discussions of this issue, see, for example, A. Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); D. Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2005).
 15. See further Raitt, "Contagious Ecstasy"; T. Tate, *Modernism, History and the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), ch. 2.
 16. Unsigned review, 'New Novels', *Nation* (7 August 1915), p. 426.
 17. See, for example, Wyndham Lewis, *Blasting and Bombadiering* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1937).
 18. See I. Beckett, 'The British Army, 1914–18: The Illusion of Change', in I. Turner (ed.), *Britain and the First World War* (London, Unwin Hyman, 1988), pp. 99–116.
 19. G. DeGroot, *Blighty: British Society in the Era of the Great War* (London and New York: Longman, 1996), p. 46. See also J. M. Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986); A. Marwick, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991); H. Strachan, *The First World War: A New Illustrated History* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2003).
 20. T. Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War: Britain and the Great War, 1914–1918* (Cambridge: Polity, 1986), p. 167.
 21. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
 22. *Ibid.*, p. 168.
 23. In total, about 6 million British men would serve in the war.
 24. Unsigned article, 'England in Time of War: Huddersfield, the Valley of Khaki', *The Times*, 28 January 1915, p. 6.
 25. See, for example, G. Braybon, *Women Workers in the First World War: The British Experience* (London: Croom Helm, 1981); G. Braybon and P. Summerfield, *Out of the Cage: Women's Experiences in Two World Wars* (London: Pandora, 1987); J. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory and the First World War in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); S. Ouditt, *Fighting Forces, Writing Women: Identity and Ideology in the First World War* (London: Routledge, 1994).
 26. S. Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: The Bodley Head, 1990).
 27. Henri Barbusse, *Under Fire*, trans. W. Fitzwater Wray (1916; London: Dent, 1988), pp. 334–7.
 28. Potter, *Boys in Khaki*, p. 123. The first print run of *Richard Chatterton* was 8,000 copies. Later runs included 25,000 copies in 1916, 19,000 in 1917 and nearly 35,000 in 1918. Potter's figures come from the ledgers of Hodder & Stoughton, MS 16310, Guildhall Library.

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